GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4725
ANSWERED ON:23.04.2003
AUDIOTEX SERVICES
NANDIPAKU VENKATASWAMY

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated a new policy for providing `Audiotex` services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of service providers granted licences to start these services as on January 31, 2003?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUI MAHAJAN)

(a) & (b): Sir, Policy for grant of Licences for `Voice Mail/Audiotex Service` which existed earlier was modified in July, 2001 in terms of New telecom Policy-1999 and Unified Messaging Service was added to it. The salient features of the said policy are given in the Annexure.

(c) 8 companies were having 29 licences to provide the said Service in 15 Service Areas as on 31.01.2003. In addition, Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Providers, Fixed Service Providers and Cable Service Providers are free to provide Voice Mail/Audiotex/Unified Messaging Service over their network subject to certain conditions.

ANNEXURE

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE POLICY ON VOICE MAIL/AUDIOTEX/UNIFIED MESSAGING SERVICE.

1. Any Indian Company can obtain license on non-exclusive basis. There is no limit on the number of licensees.

2. Area - Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA). From outside the SDCA, the service will be allowed to be accessed on Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) call basis.

3. Entry Fee - NIL

4. License Fee - NIL

5. Foreign Direct Investment - 100% allowed.
6. Period of License - 15 years and may be extended by 5 years subject to certain conditions.

7 Cellular/Basic Service Operators/Cable Service Providers are free to provide the said service without the need for obtaining any additional license. However, the revenue earned by these operators through this Service, if any, shall be counted towards the revenue for the purpose of paying licence fee under the License granted to them.

8. For providing Unified Messaging Service (UMS) under the license, the Licensee must also have an internet Service Provider(ISP) Licence in the same area proposed to be covered by the UMS Service.

9. Licensee shall make its own arrangements for all infrastructure involved in providing the service and shall be solely responsible for installation and operation of necessary equipment and systems, treatment of subscriber complaints, issue of bills to its subscribers, collection of revenue, attending to claims and damages arising out of their operations.